A WALKING TOUR OF

Dawson City Cemeteries

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During the height of the Klondike Goldrush, Dawson City was a crowded, vibrant town. Many more lived and worked on the creeks but were brought to Dawson City if they needed hospitalization. Those who died were buried in cemeteries you may visit during your stay. Some of the graves you will see are those of the "movers and shakers" of their day.

In the early years, all the markers were painted white and the names and information affixed with lead-based black paint. Because the only highway into Dawson was the Yukon River, it was very costly to ship in stone monuments, so creative metal workers in town made tin obelisks and painted them white to resemble marble or granite. The white paint is now long gone, along with the inscriptions but, with careful research and restoration supported by the Government of Yukon, most of the names are now known. There are Catholic, Protestant and Jewish cemeteries and others for various fraternal orders that thrived here well into the 20th century.

Dawson City was a boomtown in its heyday but as the population diminished the graves fell into disrepair. The town could not afford to keep the many cemeteries maintained and in the 1960s, when the population was fewer than 1,000, many of the original wooden markers fell to the ground where moisture and ants took their toll.

Thanks to the restoration project, many of the crosses and markers are once more upright and visitors can enjoy walking leisurely through the cemeteries to read the inscriptions. Many come to reconnect with ancestors who arrived during the Goldrush.

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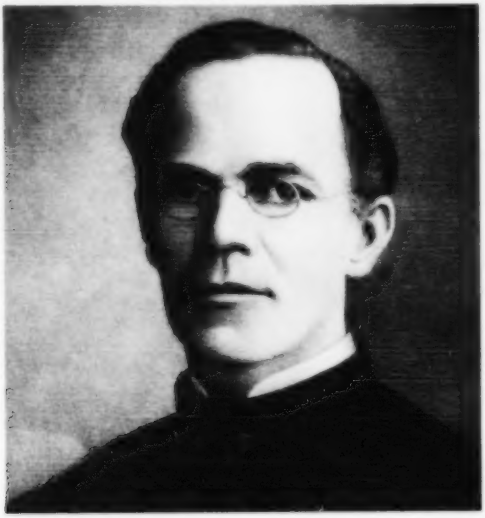
We begin the tour by going to the north end of Front St. and turning left where a telephone pole appears in the middle of the road. The gravesite is on the other side of the small, white building and overlooks the Yukon River.

1. FATHER WILLIAM S. JUDGE, 1899
"The Saint of Dawson"

"Will" Judge was born in Baltimore, Maryland in 1850 to a devout Catholic family. He came from Alaska in 1894 to establish a mission at Forty Mile when that gold camp was at its peak. When gold was discovered in the Klondike, he left for Dawson, arriving in March 1897.



Father Judge saw the great need for a hospital to treat the sick and first erected a tent to serve that purpose. A log hospital soon replaced the tent and it was filled to capacity. The Sisters of St. Ann did not arrive in Dawson that fall to assist him so Father Judge laboured on, tending the sick and burying the dead. He worked tirelessly day and night. A church was built next to the hospital and Father Judge served as parish priest in addition to his ministrations to the sick and dying.

He was well-loved by everyone, especially the miners. His kindness and generosity earned him the sobriquet of "The Saint of Dawson."

His tireless dedication to others exhausted his thin, frail body and he passed away of pneumonia in January 1899 at the age of 49. His funeral was the largest in Dawson and he was buried "on the Gospel side of the altar" in the church he had built.

Go back along Front St., turn left up King St., (which becomes Mary McLeod Road) to reach the cemeteries on the hill. Turn at the first left, then right to a tiny lane. The large cemetery with numerous crosses is St. Mary's.

ST. MARY'S CEMETERY

The first recorded burial in this cemetery was Charles Staley from Eureka, Utah who died in 1898. The site is at the back, the first grave on the left in Row I; the marker has not survived.

2. NOLASQUE "JACK" TREMBLAY, 1935

Jack Tremblay and his partners located some rich claims on Miller Creek in 1892 and he was already a successful Yukon miner when gold was discovered in the Klondike District. Tremblay and his wife, Emilie, came to Dawson City at the time of the discovery and mined successfully on Eldorado Creek for several years. In 1915, mining was on the wane and Emilie established a ladies' shop in Dawson where the finest in French fashions and ribbons could be purchased. The store stands today, under the care of Parks Canada, on the corner of Third and King streets.

Jack and Emilie served as godparents to many children born at Miller Creek, Forty Mile Camp, Dawson City and the creeks of the Klondike. The couple was well-loved.

Jack was such a respected and admired man that he was known as the "Grand Old Man" and his marker says it all. A place was left for Emilie, but she is buried in Victoria, B.C. His beautiful white tin marker with green pipe surround stands in Row XXI.

3. JOSEF WALTER KAVETSKI, 1921

Born in Poland, immigrating to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania as a youth, Josef arrived in Dawson just after the Klondike Gold Rush on the invitation of his cousin, Andy Rystogi, who was already established in Dawson as an entrepreneur. By 1909 Kavetski purchased the Third Avenue Harness Shop from Mr. Brown who left Dawson suddenly. Josef was a maker of fine harnesses for horses and dogs. He lived upstairs over his shop, as was the custom of the day. Brown's Harness Shop can be seen today in its original location. His marker is in Row XVI, a standing wooden fragment plus a flat, new marble stone.

4. EMMA WOODS, 1914

Originally from Kentucky, Emma was living in Helena, Montana when news of the Klondike strike reached her. She was in Dawson by 1898. Having walked over Chilkoot Pass, she was registered in one of the boats passing Tagish Post. Originally a Baptist, she converted to Catholicism just prior to her death. She had been employed in the household of the Dell Bundy family (their house is still in Dawson).

Emma was a member of the sizeable black community in Dawson's early days. Upon her death, Emma's friends honoured her by placing this large and impressive cross to mark her grave and built the long-lasting metal surround. Her burial site is in Row XIII on the right side.

5. ALEXANDER "BIG ALEX" MCDONALD
"King of the Klondike", 1856 – 1909

Likeable, good-looking and successful, Alex McDonald once held more claims in the Klondike region than any other individual, and took out $8,000,000 in gold. He was generous beyond description and was knighted by the Vatican for having donated all the funds to rebuild Father Judge's church after its destruction by fire in 1898.

Sadly, he, like so many other miners, thought the money supply would never end. He died in poverty and alone, near his cabin in the Clear Creek area while chopping wood. His wooden marker is in the middle of Row IV within a silver pipe surround.

6. MERILDA ST. PIERRE PEPIN, 1909

A member of the large French-Canadian community in Dawson and on the creeks, this popular young wife died at the age of 28 on March 2, 1909. Her funeral was held in the Catholic church Alex McDonald built and the coffin was brought here in a glass, horse-drawn sled hearse. Over 100 attended, and an elaborate wooden marker was built to resemble marble. Painted white and fenced in, it must have been very impressive. The marker was reconstructed in 2000 and, although her name is difficult to read, she might be pleased that woodpeckers have found refuge in the wooden structure. Her marker stands in Row V and has distinctive holes in it.

7. MAINVILLE TWINS, ARTHUR & ALBERT, 1906

Tragedy struck the Mainville household when twin baby boys died within a few days of each other of "summer complaint" so their deaths were probably caused by dehydration. Their grieving parents had lost another young child just 17 months earlier, which makes this even more tragic. The marker is difficult to read and the translation from French is: "They loved each other in this world and death will not separate them." Their marker is in Row III, with pipe surround and a striking heart ornament.

Cross the lane to visit the Sisters of Saint Ann.

8. SISTERS OF ST. ANN

Mary Lidwine, 1909; Mary John Damacene, 1923; Mary Antonia of Jesus, 1935; Mary Gédéon, 1950.

Words do not do justice to the hard work these nuns performed over the years at St. Mary's Hospital. For many years the Sisters took care of the elders who could not take care of themselves. Their presence is missed in Dawson. The gravesite is marked by a white cross and a grey granite stone, 3 rows from the back and two rows over from the woods.

Walk down the lane to the rear entrance of the Y.O.O.P. Dome Cemetery.

YUKON ORDER OF PIONEERS DOME CEMETERY

This cemetery is surrounded by a white picket fence and situated on the corner of the Old Dome Road and Mary McLeod Road. A metal archway standing at the entrance displays the letters Y.O.O.P.

9. PERCY DEWOLFE, 1951

Percy DeWolfe arrived in Dawson in 1898 with his friend and partner, Peter Anderson. They established a commercial fishing enterprise in the summer and later that winter hauled freight with horse and dog teams.

From 1910 to 1949 Percy worked under government contract carrying the mail between Dawson City and Eagle, Alaska. He and Peter built two roadhouses along their route, one the 16-Mile Roadhouse and the other, Halfway House, where Percy and his family would live. This dangerous work of carrying the mail on the Yukon River ice earned him a silver medal from King George in 1935 for his outstanding service.

His exceptional physical endurance earned him the sobriquet of "The Iron Man." His accomplishments are

remembered today by an annual dog team race. It appropriately begins in front of his old place of employment, the Old Post Office on King Street and follows his trail to Eagle and back. His gravesite, which has a large shrub growing over it, is located in the back row left side.

10. DAVID BALLENTINE, 1874 - 1956

Born in St. John's, New Brunswick, David Ballentine came north during the Goldrush of 1898, and was probably the strongest man ever to enter the Klondike. While he never found gold, he gained employment as a carpenter who helped construct the original Palace Grand Theatre for Arizona Charlie Meadows. The lot was purchased from the founder of Dawson City, Joe Ladue, and the lumber came from two wrecked steamboats. When Parks Canada tore down the original building in the early 1960s, a beam was found with the signature of David Ballentine, much to the delight of his daughter, Margretta, who lived here at the time. He prospected unsuccessfully in the Klondike district for many years and, at his death, was the last resident member of the fraternal organization, the Arctic Brotherhood. This group was destined to die out as only those who had come into the country in the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 were allowed membership. The "AB" was a popular organization of "brothers" from the world over whose motto was "No boundaries here." His gravesite and granite marker are located in the third row from the back on the left side.

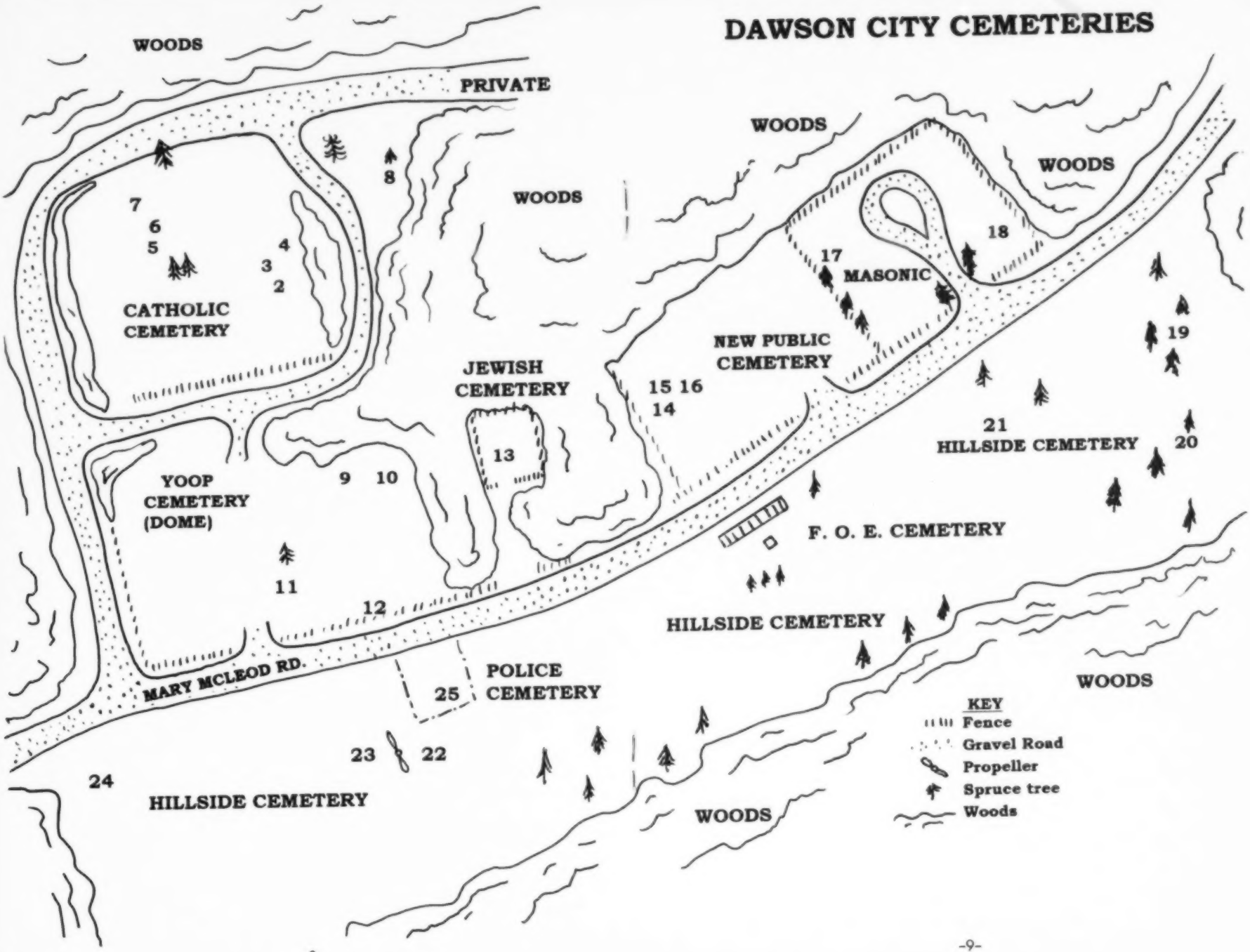
11. SHOSA "SAM" KAWAHARA, 1881 - 1971

One of several Japanese who came to Dawson after the big rush, Sam worked as a camp cook for many years. He was well-liked and lived to be 90 years old. His flat marker is white marble and is located in front of the spruce tree.

12. JACK and HAZEL MELOY, 1983, 1973

This pioneer couple, the last of their kind, epitomized the spirit of rugged independence and self-reliance. Their word was their bond. Hazel was a descendant of John Hunt Morgan, the Confederate officer who terrorized the American Midwest during the Civil War. Jack, born in Yakima, Washington, ran away from home at the age of 12. They met in the Chisana district where they both worked pack horse trains freighting supplies to miners in the Chisana Gold Rush. The couple entered the Yukon in 1913, married at Ft. Selkirk, and lived many years on the banks of the Yukon River. They freighted, each ran a winter trap line, and operated a trading post at Coffee Creek for Taylor and Drury. Later, settling at Kirkman Creek they were known for their hospitality and integrity. Their gracious log home boasted beautiful gardens and birdhouses and they served their guests on fine bone china (although their old camp enamelware was preferred when dining alone).

In the mid-60s when Jack's health demanded living closer to medical facilities, they moved to town and held court in their home on the corner of Harper and 8th Avenue. Their legacy is the great respect they earned from all they met. A creek in the Dawson Range is named for Jack. Their black marble marker is in the first row, left.


DAWSON CITY CEMETERIES
WOODS
PRIVATE
WOODS
WOODS
WOODS
7
6
5
4
3
2
8
18
17
MASONIC
CATHOLIC CEMETERY
JEWISH CEMETERY
NEW PUBLIC CEMETERY
19
15 16
14
13
21
HILLSIDE CEMETERY
20
YOOP CEMETERY (DOME)
9
10
F. O. E. CEMETERY
11
12
HILLSIDE CEMETERY
WOODS
MARY MCLEOD RD.
25
POLICE CEMETERY
KEY
Fence
Gravel Road
Propeller
Spruce tree
Woods
23
22
24
HILLSIDE CEMETERY
WOODS

Immediately beside the Y.O.O.P. to the left (as you face the road), is the Jewish Cemetery, surrounded by a white picket fence. It is set in from the road and is marked by the Star of David.

JEWISH CEMETERY, Bet Chaim (House of Life)

In 1902, the Baron de Hirsch Congregation in Dawson had a membership of nearly 200 and at that time requested a burial plot from the Territorial Government. There are five burials here; only the grave of Solomon Packer is identified. Several other members of the congregation are buried in the Hillside Cemetery across the road.

13. SOLOMON PACKER, 1918

This popular merchant who owned a hardware store on Front Street passed away at the age of 57. As indicated on the marker, he was a member of the Yukon Order of Pioneers, but chose to be buried in the cemetery of his faith. The marker was probably purchased and erected by his good friend, Harry Pinkiert of San Francisco who made annual trips to Dawson to visit him. Pinkiert had formerly been a businessman in Dawson and was President of the Baron de Hirsch Congregation.

Solomon was divorced and his only daughter had passed away earlier. His surviving son came to Dawson to administer his estate, returned to St. Paul, Minnesota to disappear from all records in the 1930s.

Beside the Jewish Cemetery is the New Public Cemetery, with a white picket fence in front.

NEW PUBLIC CEMETERY

By 1977, Hillside Cemetery was full and the City of Dawson cleared land across the road for a new public cemetery. By this time, most surnames of early Dawson pioneers had disappeared and Dawson City entered a different era.

14. ELWYN "TAFFY" WILLIAMS, 1978

Elegant in its simplicity is the wooden board marking the final resting-place of this kind and gentle man from Wales. "Taffy" came to Dawson and worked for the Yukon Consolidated Gold Company. He maintained a small log cabin on Queen Street where he entertained visitors by the hour with his substantial record collection. He kept a beautiful garden and shared vegetables and flowers with friends and strangers alike. The unique inscription on his marker reflects the high regard in which the community held him.

He truly was "A gentle gentleman." His gravesite is on the left-hand side, has a white picket fence and a dark brown headboard.

15. FRANCOIS PERRET & ZDENKA SNAJBERKOVA, 1977

A modern-day tragedy. When 76-year-old Francois became gravely ill in their cabin on upper Bonanza in December of 1977, 65-year-old Zdenka set out on foot to seek help "in extremely cold weather." She was found frozen to death on the trail very near a neighbour who could have helped them. When the search party arrived at the cabin, they found Francois had also died. They were (and still are) missed by the mining community. Buried together in this unique configuration, relatives have honoured them with headstones.

16. DORIS AND JOSEPH VOGLER, 1992, 1993

Joe Vogler led a movement for a "free Alaska." He sought secession from the U.S. and the joining together of Alaska with Yukon and part of northern British Columbia to become a separate country with laws favourable to miners. Although an American, he vowed he would never be buried in Alaska until it was free. The Alaska flag clearly marks this beautiful gravesite and is faithfully visited by followers each year. His and his wife's markers are surrounded by a white picket fence.

Beside the New Public Cemetery is the Masonic, which has a blue and white picket fence.

MASONIC CEMETERY

Although the Masonic Lodge was organized in Dawson in 1901, the land for this cemetery was not acquired until 14 years later. The first recorded burial was on April 4, 1915.

17. ADAM MACKAY, 1921

Adam Mackay moved from Ontario to Nebraska and then to Oregon before joining the Klondike Stampede in 1898. He was at Sheep Camp when the avalanche occurred on the Chilkoot Pass Trail. He immediately wrote home to his wife assuring her that he was safe and had survived. In the Klondike he obtained a "lay" on a claim (acquiring mining rights to a portion of the claim) and the next year sent for his wife and daughter. He later gave up mining and worked for a sawmill and still later established a dairy farm. Mackay's daughter, Lucille Hooker, who rode the White Pass railroad to Lake Bennett in 1899 with her mother, died in Vancouver in 1999 at the age of 107. Prior to her death she gave an interview in which she described in great detail the trip into the Yukon, her life in Dawson City, and valuable details of the history of Dawson from 1899 until 1931 when she left.

Adam's flat, black marble marker is located on the left side, next to the fence.

18. THOMAS FIRTH, 1941

Thomas Firth left home at the age of 13 to travel and work at many different occupations. In 1898, he was 31 years old when he arrived in Dawson City where he established a Brokerage and Financial Agents Office. His business

thrived and he became the agent for several insurance companies. He and his sweetheart of seventeen years were able to marry and the family lived on 7th Avenue in Dawson. Their son, Howard, took over the business in the late 1930s and moved it and the family to Whitehorse when that city became Yukon's capitol in the 1950s. Howard's children continue to operate the family insurance business. Thomas' marker is on the right side, close to the fence.

If you cross the road from the Masonic Cemetery, you will be in the old section of Hillside Cemetery.

HILLSIDE CEMETERY
(THE PUBLIC, OR PROTESTANT CEMETERY)

This cemetery, established in the fall of 1898, has two other smaller cemeteries within its boundaries. They are the Police Cemetery and the burial plot of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. Originally public burials were made "on the side of the hill".

At the east end (the oldest part) there is a plot containing several children's graves surrounded by iron bedsteads. It was the custom of the time for parents to bury deceased babies' under their crib tops to indicate that "they were only sleeping".

19. AINO IDA KAAKINEN, 1905

Aino Ida was the 11-month-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Emil Kaakinen, of Finland and was one of three Dawson children to die within a 24-hour period of unknown causes referred to as "dysentery, summer complaint or fever". The parents had a fence constructed surrounding this site and over the past 100 years a huge spruce tree has grown in the middle of the grave. The marker has been mounted on the tree to ensure its survival. Her grave is at the east end.

20. OTOKICHI ARAMI, 1901

Otokichi Arami, born in Japan, died at age 36 in August of 1901. His death was not reported in the local newspaper and little is known of him. However, he was not forgotten as this marker was erected in July 1904 by H. U. Matsumoto, relationship unknown. His wooden marker has inscriptions in Japanese and English and a fine spruce stands close by.

21. JOSIAH PERKINS, 1910

This is the only American Civil War monument in Dawson City's many cemeteries. Josiah Perkins died at the age of 67 in 1910. He and his partner, Sharron, operated a store in Dawson and Josiah was among those who braved the Chilkoot Pass and entered the country during the Gold Rush. He served in the "Grand Army of the Republic" in the New Hampshire Infantry on the side of the Union. His white marble marker is located roughly across the road from the Masonic Cemetery entrance, about four rows from the road.

22. CHARLIE RIVERS, 1977

Charlie Rivers' life spanned 83 years. Born at the gold camp of Fortymile in 1894, his family moved upriver to Dawson. First Nation men were frequently

appointed Special Constables with the Northwest Mounted Police (later Royal Canadian Mounted Police) because of their knowledge and skill in traversing the wilds of the Yukon. Special Constable Rivers was a member of Corporal Dempster's Patrol sent out to find the famous Lost Fitzgerald Patrol. His wife and daughter are buried beside him. His flat marker is located directly behind the police cemetery.

23. JAN WELZL, 1868 - 1948

This intelligent eccentric was an explorer, inventor and author. He was born in Czechoslovakia and led a life of adventure and discovery across the north. Each year small delegations of followers visit this site to conduct memorial services. A black, iron cross and Czech flags mark his gravesite.

24. CHESTER HENDERSON, 1918 - 1971

The quiet, dignified grandson of Robert Henderson, the first man to find gold on Gold Bottom Creek, was a woodcutter, collector of fine guns and axes, and prospected each summer believing that the Mother Lode was yet to be found. He was a man of great integrity who chose to live on the banks of the Klondike River. His neat log cabin was far away from the bustle of town. The community of Henderson's Corner outside of Dawson marks the place he lived. His gravesite is marked by a grey marble stone within a white picket fence near the road, about two rows in.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES PLOT

The Fraternal Order of Eagles was a popular and large organization in Dawson City. While they enjoyed a full social calendar, they extended their charity to members and their families when in need. Dawson Aerie 50 was organized in March 1900 with 35 members. Within a few months it had grown to over 225. Of the 13 identified Eagle graves in this plot to date, only one name, Gus Gustafson, is discernible. The Eagle Plot is located right beside the road with a huge, concrete marker in the background.

POLICE CEMETERY

There are 18 graves here dating from 1896 - 1936 and they are well maintained by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It is located immediately beside the road and has a fence around it.

25. EDWARD FLETT, 1899

Edward joined the Northwest Mounted Police January 18, 1898 as a Special Constable for "pay at the rate of $30 a month with rations and a bonus of $10 per month if found satisfactory." He signed an oath of allegiance to Queen Victoria. His service was short as he died Feb. 16, 1899, just over a year later.

Edward Flett may be a descendant of Andrew Flett, an Orkneyman attached to the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Selkirk. Andrew was allowed to marry the daughter of a First Nation hunter at the post. The Hudson's Bay Company needed the services of a woman to sew winter clothes for the men and to dry and smoke meat and fish for winter supplies.

To see the older Y.O.O.P. cemetery, go back down Mary McLeod Road, turn left (7th Ave.) at the stop sign, turn left up Queen and follow the road up to 8th Ave. where the Y.O.O.P. cemetery is surrounded by a white picket fence. (Please refer to the map on the back of this brochure.)

Y.O.O.P. Hall, August 17, 1946

YUKON ORDER OF PIONEERS 8TH AVE. CEMETERY

This is the first cemetery of this charitable, fraternal organization which was founded at the Forty Mile gold camp in 1894. It still thrives today in Dawson City where Lodge No. 1 meets monthly.

For many years their focus was to look after the welfare of "old-timers." The old-timers are gone now and the focus of the Lodge today is to help those in need within the community.

26. FREDERICK WASHINGTON HARTE, 1897

Harte was born in Ireland and graduated from the University of Dublin Medical College. He entered the Yukon in 1873 and was among the first parties to prospect for gold. He was a charter member of the Pioneers and worked for Jack McQuesten, Arthur Harper and Al Mayo who were independent agents for the Alaska Commercial Co. His grave is the earliest known in the cemetery and is a stone monument two rows from the front entrance on the left side.

27. C. W. C. TABOR, 1917

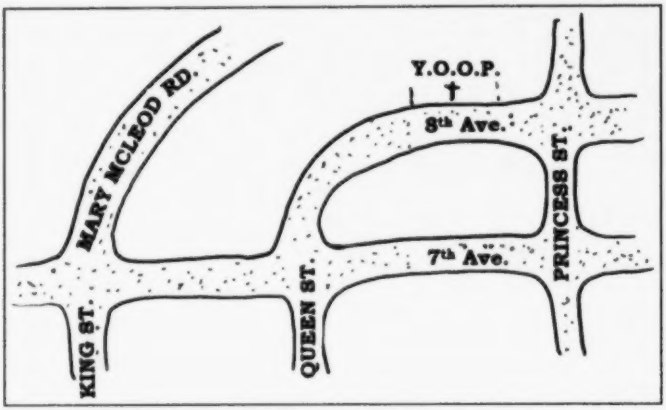
Charles Tabor studied law in the office of George Black, who became a Commissioner of the Yukon and then was our Yukon member of parliament in Ottawa from 1921 to 1949. Tabor became King's Counsellor in Dawson and was the lawyer for a large clientele of miners and mining companies before he became a member of the Yukon Legislative Assembly. Although a prominent member of Dawson society, Tabor married dancer Gertrude Lovejoy who was well known as "Diamond Tooth Gertie" for the diamond fastened between her front teeth. Tabor Lakes in northern Yukon are named for Charles Tabor. His marker is a white marble cross, third row from the back of the cemetery.

28. GEORGE BRIMSTON, 1923

Born in Ireland, this popular member of Dawson's community served at various times as a mail carrier, undertaker and sheriff. As a member of the Yukon Order of Pioneers, he instituted the first Discovery Day celebration in 1915. Discovery Day activities still thrive today, the third weekend each August closest to the 17th of the month. George Brimston's Discovery Days were funded by public subscription and all events and food were free. Benefits even included sending taxis to all the homes on the creeks to bring in the women and children, and then taking them home at the end of the day's festivities. His granite marker is at the very back beside his young son's.

IN CONCLUSION

In the limited space of this brochure there was room for only 30 individuals but many more could have been included. The creek banks and hills of the Klondike also hold the remains of countless unknown men, women and children. The mining communities of Granville, Grand Forks, Gold Bottom and others all had their own cemeteries. Very few markers have survived and only a few are readable. This brochure is dedicated to the memory of the spirit and accomplishments of the residents of Dawson City.



YOOP 8TH AVE CEMETERY

DAWSON CITY MUSEUM

Please contact the Dawson City Museum for information regarding burial locations for relatives who passed away in the Dawson area. More information about the Dawsonites in this booklet, and others in our history, is on file at the Klondike History Library in the Dawson City Museum, 5th Ave, Dawson City, Yukon, (867) 993-5291, or email dcmuseum@northwestel.net

DAWSON CITY MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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